

Since this path is obtained when Bodhisattvas are able to newly generate the wisdom that is able to *see* or perceive emptiness directly, it is called 'path of *seeing*'.

The newly attained mind that realizes emptiness directly is a yogic direct perceiver that, when it manifests in practitioners' continua, completely removes – during one meditative session – intellectually acquired obstructions. Intellectually acquired obstructions (also called: ideologically acquired obstructions) are acquired in this lifetime due to the influence of philosophical, religious, scientific, or cultural views and beliefs.

However, it is important to understand that there is a difference between the assertions of the two Madhyamika tenets (the Svatantrika Madhyamika and the Prasangika Madhyamika Tenet) regarding the kinds of intellectually acquired obstructions that are eliminated on the Mahayana path of seeing.

Svatantrika Madhyamika Tenet

According to the Svatantrika Madhyamika Tenet, Bodhisattvas remove afflictive and cognitive obstructions simultaneously, starting the elimination of these two types of obstructions on the path of seeing. Therefore, since obstructions that are eliminated on the path of seeing are generally intellectually acquired, the obstructions that Bodhisattvas eliminate simultaneously on the path of seeing are intellectually acquired *afflictive* obstructions and intellectually acquired *cognitive* obstructions. Once the path of seeing has abandoned the intellectually acquired obstructions, practitioners gradually move on to the path of meditation with which they then eliminate the various layers of the *innate* afflictive obstructions and the *innate* cognitive obstructions.

	Path of Seeing	Path of Meditation
Obstructions that are eliminated	Intellectually acquired afflictive obstructions & intellectually acquired cognitive obstructions are eliminated simultaneously.	First the coarsest layers of the innate afflictive and cognitive obstructions are eliminated simultaneously, then the more subtle innate afflictive and cognitive obstructions are eliminated simultaneously, and so forth.

Prasangika Madhyamika Tenet

According to the Prasangika Madhyamika Tenet, afflictive and cognitive obstructions are not removed simultaneously but sequentially. Bodhisattvas first eliminate intellectually acquired afflictive obstructions on the path of seeing, then innate afflictive obstructions from the first to the seventh bhumi of the path of meditation, and lastly cognitive obstructions from the eighth to the tenth bhumi of the path of meditation. Since cognitive obstructions are not abandoned on the path of seeing but only on the path of meditation, the proponents of the Prasangika Madhyamika Tenet do not categorize cognitive obstructions into intellectually acquired and innate cognitive obstructions.

	Path of Seeing	Path of Meditation
Obstructions that are eliminated	Intellectually acquired afflictive obstructions are eliminated.	From the 1st to the 7th Bodhisattva bhumi innate <i>afflictive</i> obstructions are eliminated. Then from the 8th to the 10th Bodhisattva bhumi <i>cognitive</i> obstructions are eliminated.

However, during the path of seeing Bodhisattvas are not merely absorbed in the wisdom that directly realizes emptiness and eliminates intellectually acquired obstructions, but when they arise from the meditative absorption also accumulate merit by practicing the six perfections, and so forth.

Therefore, the path of seeing can be categorized into two stages:

- i. The meditative equipoise of the path of seeing (or strictly speaking: the *exalted wisdom* of the meditative equipoise of the path of seeing)
- ii. The subsequent attainment of the path of seeing (or strictly speaking: the *exalted wisdom* of the subsequent attainment of the path of seeing)

i. The meditative equipoise of the path of seeing

The meditative equipoise of the path of seeing is the path of seeing that directly realizes the emptiness of true existence of all phenomena. It is a non-dual awareness, for, as mentioned above, to such an awareness all appearances of subject and object become inseparable, like water being poured into water. This meditative equipoise can be further subdivided into three types:

- 1) The uninterrupted path of the path of seeing
- 2) The path of release of the path of seeing
- 3) The meditative equipoise of the path of seeing that is neither an uninterrupted path nor a path release

All three are meditative equipoises that directly realize emptiness.

1) *The uninterrupted path of the path of seeing*

The uninterrupted path of the path of seeing refers to the first moment of the path of seeing that eliminates the objects of abandonments of the path of seeing, i.e. intellectually acquired obstructions. In general, whatever is an uninterrupted path is necessarily a meditative equipoise that eliminates particular objects of abandonment, i.e. any of the obstructions. It is called 'uninterrupted' because without interruption or intervals this meditative equipoise remains manifest until whatever obstructions it eliminates *are eliminated*. The moment they are eliminated, the uninterrupted path transforms into the path of release.

2) *The path of release of the path of seeing*

In general, the path of release is a meditative equipoise that arises immediately after the uninterrupted path. It arises, as mentioned above, when the obstructions (which its preceding uninterrupted path eliminates) *are eliminated*, i.e. when the elimination or cessation of those obstructions is attained.

In the case of the path of seeing, the path of release of the path of seeing arises immediately after the uninterrupted path of the path of seeing when the *intellectually acquired* obstructions (which its preceding uninterrupted path of the path of seeing eliminates) *are eliminated*.

Therefore, the uninterrupted path of the path of seeing arises first and eliminates the intellectually acquired obstructions. The moment they *are eliminated* the uninterrupted path of seeing transforms into the path of release of the path of seeing. The latter is called the path of 'release' because it is freed or released from whatever objects of abandonment its preceding uninterrupted path eliminated.

Both, the uninterrupted path of the path of seeing and the path of release of the path of seeing are *direct* antidotes to the intellectually acquired obstructions since they are both responsible for their elimination.

(Please note that whatever is a *direct* antidote of an obstruction is necessarily responsible for the permanent elimination of that obstruction.)

An analogy for the uninterrupted path and the path of release cited in the scriptures is that of getting rid of a thief. The uninterrupted path is analogue to removing the thief from the house whereas the path of release is analogue to closing the door to ensure that he will not return.

3) *The meditative equipoise of the path of seeing that is neither an uninterrupted path nor a path release*

The meditative equipoise of the path of seeing that is neither an uninterrupted path nor a path of release is a mental consciousness that directly realizes emptiness but that does not serve as a direct antidote to any of the obstructions.

In the case of the path of seeing, this type of meditative equipoise arises during the stage of the subsequent attainment of the path of seeing. It is not responsible for the elimination of the intellectually acquired obstructions because they have already been eliminated. It is also not responsible for the elimination of any of the innate obstructions because it lacks the capacity to serve as their direct antidote. It does not have the capacity to serve as the direct antidote of any of the innate obstructions because it is a path of seeing and only a path of meditation has the capacity to serve as the direct antidote to any of the innate obstructions.